

Primary Matters

Wearing her hat as a member of the ESTA Secondary Working Group, Maggie Williams has written this brief item to reinforce the message that teaching Earth science in primary schools really does matter and to explain what ESTA is planning to do to encourage ESTA members to help/ support the teaching of Earth science in their local primary schools.

Earth science continues to hold a strong place in the National Curricula of England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland at Key Stages 1 and 2. In essence the new National Curricula for science aim to ensure that pupils develop scientific knowledge and understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science.

As part of their learning, the expectation is that that pupils will be introduced to different types of scientific enquiries to:

- help them answer scientific questions about the world around them and
- equip them with the scientific knowledge required to understand the uses and implications of science.

For teachers in some primary schools these may well be daunting tasks, particularly if these schools do not have resources to help them deliver the new Earth science-related aspects of the new curricula.

In response to recent changes in the National Curricula, at the 2015 meeting of ESTA's Secondary Working Group, ESTA decided to produce a new booklet - *Engaging with primary schools*. This booklet, designed for ESTA members working in the secondary sector, outlines the Earth science content in the new curricula. *Engaging with primary schools* will include Primary Earth Learning Ideas, links to Rockwatch activities, lists of useful web resources, ideas for special projects that could be organised to cover 'issues of the day' such as earthquakes, volcanoes and floods or linked to national Earth Science Week activities. ESTA anticipates that the booklet will be completed and placed on the ESTA website before the start of the new academic year.

The main aim of the booklet is to encourage these ESTA members to help their primary colleagues to deliver the Earth science components in the new curricula by sharing their expertise, knowledge and existing school/ college resources. Liaison of this type is essential to show that 'primary matters' and to:

- allow successful transition from primary school to secondary school;
- enhance the understanding of Earth science;
- share enthusiasm about Earth science;
- develop a sense of excitement and curiosity about natural phenomena;
- help pupils understand how science can explain what is occurring on their planet and
- help pupils engage in the world around them.

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